


COUNTRY DATA: JAPAN: Information from the CIA World Factbook

INTRODUCTION

In 1603, after decades of civil warfare, the Tokugawa shogunate (a military-led, dynastic government) ushered in a long period of relative political stability and isolation from foreign influence. For more than two centuries this policy enabled Japan to enjoy a flowering of its indigenous culture. Japan opened its ports after signing the Treaty of Kanagawa with the US in 1854 and began to intensively modernize and industrialize. During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Japan became a regional power that was able to defeat the forces of both China and Russia. It occupied Korea, Formosa (Taiwan), and southern Sakhalin Island. In 1931-32 Japan occupied Manchuria, and in 1937 it launched a full-scale invasion of China. Japan attacked US forces in 1941 - triggering America's entry into World War II - and soon occupied much of East and Southeast Asia. After its defeat in World War II, Japan recovered to become an economic power and an ally of the US. While the emperor retains his throne as a symbol of national unity, elected politicians hold actual decision-making power. Following three decades of unprecedented growth, Japan's economy experienced a major slowdown starting in the 1990s, but the country remains a major economic power.

GEOGRAPHY

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| Location | Eastern Asia, island chain between the North Pacific Ocean and the Sea of Japan, east of the Korean Peninsula. |
| Area | 377,915 sq km |
| Climate | Varies from tropical in south to cool temperate in north. |
| Natural Resources | Negligible mineral resources, fish. <i>Note:</i> with virtually no energy natural resources, Japan is the world's largest importer of coal and liquefied natural gas, as well as the second largest importer of oil. |
| Total Renewable Water Resources | 430 cu km (1999) |
| Freshwater Withdrawal | 88.43 cu km/yr (20%/18%/62%) |
| Natural Hazards | Many dormant and some active volcanoes; about 1,500 seismic occurrences (mostly tremors) every year; tsunamis; typhoons. Volcanism: both Unzen (elev. 1,500 m, 4,621 ft) and Sakura-jima (elev. 1,117 m, 3,665 ft), which lies near the densely populated city of Kagoshima, have been deemed "Decade Volcanoes" by the International Association of Volcanology and Chemistry of the Earth's Interior, worthy of study due to their explosive history and close proximity to human populations; other notable historically active volcanoes include Asama, Honshu Island's most active volcano, Aso, Bandai, Fuji, Iwo-Jima, Kikai, Kirishima, Komaga-take, Oshima, Suwanosejima, Tokachi, Yake-dake, and Usu. |
| Environmental Issues | Air pollution from power plant emissions results in acid rain; acidification of lakes and reservoirs degrading water quality and threatening aquatic life; Japan is one of the largest consumers of fish and tropical timber, contributing to the depletion of these resources in Asia and elsewhere. |

| PEOPLE | |
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| Population | 126,804,433 (July 2010 est.) |
| Ethnic Groups | Japanese 98.5%, Koreans 0.5%, Chinese 0.4%, other 0.6% Note: up to 230,000 Brazilians of Japanese origin migrated to Japan in the 1990s to work in industries; some have returned to Brazil (2004). |
| Religions | Shintoism 83.9%, Buddhism 71.4%, Christianity 2%, other 7.8% Note: total adherents exceeds 100% because many people belong to both Shintoism and Buddhism (2005). |
| Languages | Japanese |
| Literacy Rate | 99% |
| Major Infectious Diseases | HIV/AIDS - adult prevalence rate: less than 0.1% (2003 est.)  |
| GOVERNMENT | |
| Type | A parliamentary government with a constitutional monarchy. |
| Independence | 3 May 1947 (current constitution adopted as amendment to Meiji Constitution). |
| Constitution | 3 May 1947 |
| Legal System | Modeled after European civil law systems with English-American influence; judicial review of legislative acts in the Supreme Court; accepts compulsory International Court of Justice jurisdiction with reservations. |
| ECONOMY | |
| Agricultural Products | Rice, sugar beets, vegetables, fruit; pork, poultry, dairy products, eggs; fish. |
| Industries | Among world's largest and technologically advanced producers of motor vehicles, electronic equipment, machine tools, steel and nonferrous metals, ships, chemicals, textiles, processed foods. |
| Import commodities | Machinery and equipment, fuels, foodstuffs, chemicals, textiles, raw materials. |
| Import Partners | China 22.2%, US 10.96%, Australia 6.29%, Saudi Arabia 5.29%, UAE 4.12%, South Korea 3.98%, Indonesia 3.95% (2009) |
| Export Commodities | Transport equipment, motor vehicles, semiconductors, electrical machinery, chemicals. |
| Export Partners | China 18.88%, US 16.42%, South Korea 8.13%, Taiwan 6.27%, Hong Kong 5.49% (2009) |
| Per Capita GDP | \$32,600 (2009 est.) |

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| Population below poverty line | N/A |
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*CITATIONS: All information included above is extracted from the CIA World Factbook except where noted.